

RemarksA. Period For Reply

A shortened statutory period was set to expire three months from the Office Action of December 29, 2004. Three months from December 29, 2004 is March 29, 2005. This Amendment and Remarks is being filed on or before March 29, 2005.

B. Status

The Office Action was a nonfinal Office Action.

C. Disposition Of Claims

Claims 1-9 and 19-20 are pending. Claims 10-18 have been canceled.

D. Application Papers

Formal drawings will be subsequently filed.

E. Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

As to domestic priority, this case claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Number 60/423,436 filed November 4, 2002. Acknowledgement of this domestic priority was made on page 2 of the Office Action of December 29, 2004. This is appreciated.

F. Attachments

Applicant filed one PTO-1449 form with the filing of this case on November 3, 2003. A copy of this PTO-1449 form has been signed and returned with the Office Action of December 29, 2004 and all of the references on this form have been initialed. This is appreciated.

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G. Basis for amendments to the claims and basis for any new claims

Independent claims 1, 19 and 20 have been amended. Basis for such amendments is allowable dependent claim 18.

H. The Office Action

H.1. Restriction (election) requirement

On page 2 of the Office Action, the restriction requirement was made final, and claims 10-17 and 21-23 were withdrawn from further consideration. If any of the withdrawn (and now canceled) claims may be rejoined, notice of such would be appreciated.

H.2. Domestic priority

On page 2 of the Office Action, applicant's claim to domestic priority was acknowledged. This is appreciated.

H.3. 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

H.3.a. Kirk

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kirk. This rejection is respectfully traversed. However, the limitations of allowable dependent claim 18 have been incorporated into independent claim 1. It is therefore respectfully submitted that amended independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 are allowable over Kirk.

H.3.b. Glockner

On page 3 of the Office Action, dependent claim 8 (dependent upon claim 1) was rejected as being anticipated

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by Glockner. This rejection is respectfully traversed. However, the limitations of allowable dependent claim 18 have been incorporated into independent claim 1 (from which claim 8 depends). It is therefore respectfully submitted that amended independent claim 1 and its dependent claim 8 are allowable over Glockner.

H.4. 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

H.4.a. Costello in view of Coughtrie

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 3 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Costello in view of Coughtrie. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As to claim 3, this claim is dependent upon claim 1, into which the limitations of allowable dependent claim 18 have been incorporated. It is hence respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 and its dependent claim 3 are allowable over the combination of Costello and Coughtrie.

As to claim 19, this is an independent claim that has been amended to include all of the limitations of amended claim 1, now having the limitations of allowable dependent claim 18. It is hence respectfully submitted that independent claim 19 is allowable over the combination of Costello and Coughtrie.

H.4.b. Kirk in view of Stover and Haumschilt

On page 3 of the Office Action, claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kirk in view of Stover et al. (Stover) and Haumschilt et al. (Haumschilt). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As to independent claim 20, this claim has been amended to include all of the limitations of amended claim 1, now

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having the limitations of allowable dependent claim 18. It is hence respectfully submitted that independent claim 20 is allowable over the combination of Kirk in view of Stover and Haumschilt.

H.5. Allowable claims

On page 5 of the Office Action, it was stated that claim 18 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. This is very much appreciated.

The limitations of dependent claim 18 have been incorporated into its base claim 1. There are no intervening claims. Hence it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-9 are in condition for allowance. It is also respectfully submitted that independent claims 19 and 20 are in condition for allowance because these claims have been amended to include the limitations of claim 18 and because each of these claims further include all of the limitations of independent claim 1.

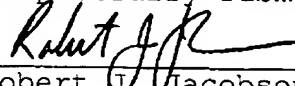
I. Summary

Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully invited to make contact with the undersigned by telephone if such would advance prosecution of this case.

Date: 2-27-05

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Respectfully submitted,


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